

## Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight

## § 1704.21

(q) *Salary offset* means an administrative offset to collect a debt under 5 U.S.C. 5514 by deductions at one or more officially established pay intervals from the current pay account of an employee without his or her consent.

(r) *Waiver* means the cancellation, remission, forgiveness, or non-recovery of a debt allegedly owed by an employee to OFHEO or another agency as permitted or required by 5 U.S.C. 5584 or 8346(b), 10 U.S.C. 2774, 32 U.S.C. 716, or any other law.

[64 FR 34969, June 30, 1999. Redesignated and amended at 65 FR 81328, Dec. 26, 2000]

### § 1704.3 Collection of debts and referrals to the Department of the Treasury.

(a) *Collection activity.* The collection of debts directly and by offset shall be pursued in accordance with this part 1704. This part 1704 incorporates all applicable debt collection provisions of the FCCS and supplements the FCCS by the prescription of procedures necessary and appropriate for the operations of OFHEO.

(b) *Referral of delinquent debts.* (1) OFHEO shall transfer to the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury any past due, legally enforceable nontax debt that has been delinquent for a period of 180 days or more so that the Secretary may take appropriate action to collect the debt or terminate collection action in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3716, 5 U.S.C. 5514, the FCCS, 5 CFR 550.1108, and 31 CFR part 285.

(2) OFHEO may transfer any past due, legally enforceable nontax debt that has been delinquent for less than a period of 180 days to a debt collection center for collection in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3716, 5 U.S.C. 5514, 5 CFR 550.1108, 31 CFR part 285, and the FCCS.

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### §§ 1704.4–1704.19 [Reserved]

## Subpart B—Salary Offset

### § 1704.20 Authority and scope.

(a) *Authority.* OFHEO may collect debts owed by employees to the Federal Government by means of salary offset under the authority of 5 U.S.C.

5514, 5 CFR part 550, subpart K, and this subpart B.

(b) *Scope.* (1) The procedures set forth in this subpart B apply to situations where OFHEO is attempting to collect a debt by salary offset that is owed to it by an individual employed by OFHEO or by another agency; or where OFHEO employs an individual who owes a debt to another agency.

(2) The procedures set forth in this subpart B do not apply to:

(i) Any routine intra-agency adjustment of pay that is attributable to clerical or administrative error or delay in processing pay documents that have occurred within the four pay periods preceding the adjustment, or any adjustment to collect a debt amounting to \$50 or less. However, at the time of any such adjustment, or as soon thereafter as possible, OFHEO or its designated payroll agent shall provide the employee with a written notice of the nature and the amount of the adjustment and a point of contact for contesting such adjustment.

(ii) Any negative adjustment to pay that arises from an employee's election of coverage or a change in coverage under a Federal benefits program that requires periodic deductions from pay, if the amount to be recovered was accumulated over four pay periods or less. However, at the time the such adjustment is made, OFHEO or its payroll agent shall provide in the employee's earnings statement a clear and concise statement that informs the employee of the previous overpayment.

### § 1704.21 Notice requirements before salary offset where OFHEO is the creditor agency.

(a) *Notice of Intent.* Deductions from an employee's salary may not be made unless OFHEO provides the employee with a Notice of Intent a minimum of 30 calendar days before the salary offset is initiated.

(b) *Contents of Notice of Intent.* The Notice of Intent shall advise the employee of the following:

(1) OFHEO has reviewed the records relating to the claim and has determined that the employee owes the debt;

**§ 1704.22**

**12 CFR Ch. XVII (1–1–02 Edition)**

(2) OFHEO intends to collect the debt by deductions from the employee's current disposable pay account;

(3) The amount of the debt and the facts giving rise to the debt;

(4) The frequency and amount of the intended deduction (stated as a fixed dollar amount or as a percentage of pay not to exceed 15 percent of disposable pay), and the intention to continue the deductions until the debt and all accumulated interest are paid in full or otherwise resolved;

(5) The name, address, and telephone number of the person to whom the employee may propose a written alternative schedule for voluntary repayment, in lieu of salary offset. The employee shall include a justification for the alternative schedule in his or her proposal. If the terms of the alternative schedule are agreed upon by the employee and OFHEO, the alternative written schedule shall be signed by both the employee and OFHEO;

(6) An explanation of OFHEO's policy concerning interest, penalties, and administrative costs, including a statement that such assessments must be made unless excused in accordance with the FCCS;

(7) The employee's right to inspect and copy all records of OFHEO pertaining to his or her debt that are not exempt from disclosure or to receive copies of such records if he or she is unable personally to inspect the records as the result of geographical or other constraints;

(8) The name, address, and telephone number of the OFHEO employee to whom requests for access to records relating to the debt must be sent;

(9) The employee's right to a hearing conducted by an impartial hearing official with respect to the existence and amount of the debt claimed or the repayment schedule *i.e.*, the percentage of disposable pay to be deducted each pay period, so long as a request is filed by the employee as prescribed in §1704.23; the name and address of the office to which the request for a hearing should be sent; and the name, address, and telephone number of a person whom the employee may contact concerning procedures for requesting a hearing;

(10) The filing of a request for a hearing on or before the 15th calendar day following receipt of the Notice of Intent will stay the commencement of collection proceedings and a final decision on whether a hearing will be held (if a hearing is requested) will be issued at the earliest practical date;

(11) OFHEO shall initiate certification procedures to implement a salary offset unless the employee files a request for a hearing on or before the 15th calendar day following receipt of the Notice of Intent;

(12) Any knowingly false or frivolous statement, representations, or evidence may subject the employee to:

(i) Disciplinary procedures appropriate under 5 U.S.C. chapter LXXV, 5 CFR part 752, or any other applicable statutes or regulations;

(ii) Penalties under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. 3729–3731, or under any other applicable statutory authority; or

(iii) Criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. 286, 287, 1001, and 1002, or under any other applicable statutory authority;

(13) Any other rights and remedies available to the employee under statutes or regulations governing the program for which the collection is being made;

(14) Unless there are applicable contractual or statutory provisions to the contrary, amounts paid on or deducted from debts that are later waived or found not to be owed to the Federal Government shall be promptly refunded to the employee; and

(15) Proceedings with respect to the debt are governed by 5 U.S.C. 5514.

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**§ 1704.22 Review of OFHEO records related to the debt.**

(a) *Request for review.* An employee who desires to inspect or copy OFHEO records related to a debt owed by the employee to OFHEO must send a letter to the individual designated in the Notice of Intent requesting access to the relevant records. The letter must be received in the office of that individual within 15 calendar days after the employee's receipt of the Notice of Intent.